

About John Roffler

John Roffler was a prolific builder and designer of homes in Camas. His first solo effort was the house for his bride, Ethel Bartow, later called "The John Roffler House". Over his brief career from 1906 until his death at forty-five years of age in 1924, Roffler designed and built over 200 houses of various architectural styles. Many of his historic dwellings still stand today in East Clark County and Skamania County.

The Roffler family moved to Camas from Minnesota in 1889, six years after the original townsite of La Camas was platted. In 1883 Henry Pittock and his associates organized the LaCamas Colony Company and purchased 2600 acres of land located on the Washington side of the Columbia river near Lacamas Lake and Creek to locate a paper mill and plat a new townsite. By 1884, the Columbia River Paper Company was in operation, an addition (Cowan's Addition) to the original townsite had been platted, businesses had opened, and the beginnings of a school and church were in evidence.

John Roffler was ten years old when he arrived in Camas with his family. He was accompanied by his mother Katharina, his three sisters Ursula Rose, Lizzie, and Anna, and his brother Ulrich (who was named after his father). The Roffler family built and lived in the "Roffler Homestead" located just before the "Y" where Leadbetter Road separates from Everett Road on the way to Fern Prairie.

During his life John Roffler was an active member of the Camas School Board and a leader in the local Presbyterian Church. Ethel Bartow Roffler was the town's first librarian, also teaching school and Sunday school. Irene Roffler attended Bellingham College in 1925 where she received her teaching degree. She taught school and became a principal in the Camas School District, retiring after forty-two years. In 1929, Ethel, Irene, and Harold moved from John Roffler IV to a Roffler-built home on N. E. Second Avenue. They later moved to an apartment and in the 1940's, Irene and Ethel moved to a new home at 1534 N. E. Everett St., just a short block from their first home, "The John Roffler House".